

Another School Bus Accident in Allegan County

Thursday, March 29, 2012 11:22 a.m. EDT



State House Representative Holly Hughes (R-Montague) is flanked by Nancee and Paul Privacky (L) as she testifies before the House Transportation Committee about her school bus safety legislation on March 28, 2012. (photo courtesy Michigan House Republicans)

HAMILTON, MI (WHTC) - For the second time in as many days, an accident involving a vehicle rear-ending a school bus occurred in Allegan County.

This time it was in Laketown Township, as an unnamed driver slammed into the back of a Hamilton Community Schools bus that had 11 students on board. It happened around 8 AM this morning on 140th Avenue west of 56th Street. The driver of the car attempted to flee on foot after the crash, but was spotted by deputies and arrested for fleeing the scene of an accident and for not having a driver's license. The suspect claimed that glare the rising sun prevented him from seeing the bus.

Yesterday morning, a Wayland Union Schools bus was struck, also from behind, as it was stopped to pick up students on 124th Avenue near 6th Street east of Shelbyville. An unnamed 19-year-old local woman said that the rising sun's glare off of the rearview mirror of her car had blinded her, and she had to be hospitalized for minor injuries. The driver and 20 students on the bus were not hurt.

Ironically, the two crashes came as State Representative Holly Hughes, a Republican from Montague, testified before the House Transportation Committee yesterday on two bills she is sponsoring that would reform how school buses are lighted, as well as improving rear guards on those vehicles that would prevent a similar-type accident that happened last fall when two Ravenna teens, Bruce and Antonia Privacky, died when their car went under a stopped bus north of Coopersville. The victims' parents also testified in support of Hughes' legislation.

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Two elementary students taken to hospital after bus crash

Published: Tuesday, March 06, 2012, 6:52 PM Updated: Wednesday, March 07, 2012, 3:06 PM



By **Lynn Moore | lmoore8@mlive.com**

Two elementary students from Reeths-Puffer's McMillan Elementary School were **taken to the hospital Tuesday afternoon after school bus** was involved in an accident about two miles from the school.

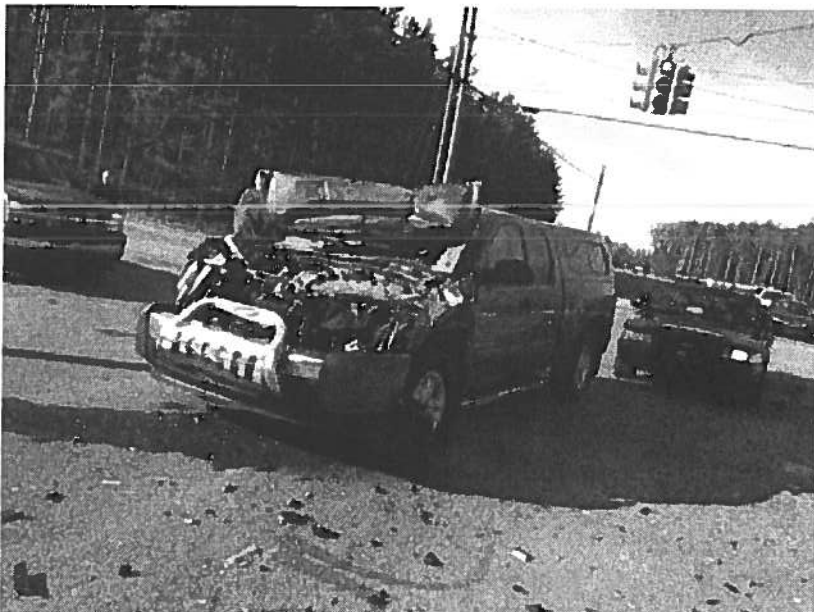
A pickup truck struck the side of the Reeths-Puffer Public Schools bus near the corner of Whitehall and River roads around 4 p.m. The bus was carrying 35 students, said Reeths-Puffer Superintendent Steve Edwards.

The bus had minor damage on the left rear corner behind the axle. The other vehicle, a pickup truck, had major front-end damage and was towed by a flatbed from the scene.



Hye Soo Nah | MLive.com

Emergency officials help students out of the school bus that was hit by a pickup truck on Tuesday afternoon, March 6, 2012 near Whitehall Rd. and W River Rd.



Chronicle | Rachel Iovan

This pickup truck hit the side of a Reeths-Puffer school bus at River and Whitehall roads in Muskegon Township.

The driver of the pickup truck was walking around after the crash but was taken by ambulance to the hospital for precaution.

A first-grader and a third-grader were taken to Mercy Health Partners Hackley Campus, where they were treated and released, Edwards said.

Shortly after the crash, parents began showing up to gather their children.

Muskegon Township Deputy Fire Chief Bob Grabinski asked them to wait until paramedics could be sure that there were

no more injured students before parents could take their children home.

Grabinski said he also wanted to be sure that students were not walking around freely near the busy intersection while personnel were busy to clean up debris from the accident.

About an hour after the crash, students who hadn't been picked up by parents at the scene were transferred to another bus and taken home, Edwards said.

All students were checked by paramedics and then either released to their parents or transferred to another bus and taken home, Edwards said.



Chronicle | Rachel Iovan

A pickup truck hit this Reeths-Puffer school bus, injuring two students.

"The first responders and Muskegon

Township Fire were amazing," Edwards said. "They were just fantastic and very thorough in their job."

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Wayland school bus hit by car; transportation director supports Privacky law

Published: Thursday, March 29, 2012, 5:04 PM Updated: Tuesday, April 03, 2012, 1:01 PM



By **Sherry Kuyt | Advance Newspapers**

The 19-year-old woman had just run into the back of a stopped school bus.

Her car had been forced partway under the bus. Glass and debris were scattered everywhere. She was injured. The smart thing, the safe thing, might have been to just stay put and wait for help to arrive.

But the teen driver managed to crawl out of her car by herself. Immediately, she hurried to the front door of the bus.

"Is everyone all right?" she called to the bus driver.

After she learned that none of the 39 children on board were hurt, she walked over to a nearby home and sat down on the porch. She was taken by ambulance to a local hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

According to the Allegan County Sheriff's Department, the teen driver - her name was not released - was headed west on 124th Avenue in Shelbyville at about 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 28.

She later told deputies that the morning sun had reflected in her rear-view mirror, temporarily blinding her.

She struck the back of a Wayland Union school bus which had stopped to pick up students. According to Wayland Union Transportation Director Jeff Schilthroat, 39 elementary students were on the bus at the time.

Schilthroat arrived shortly after the accident, and checked to make sure everyone was all right. The bus



Supplied

This photo was taken at the scene of a crash in Shelbyville, after a car ran into the back of a Wayland Union school bus carrying 39 children.

driver told him the details of the crash, and about the young women's concern for the children.

The impact caused heavy damage to the car. Schilthroat said the damage to the bus was under \$1,000.

The bus driver and students from Baker and Steeby elementary schools arrived safely at their schools on another bus.

Parents of those students were contacted, and counselors were available to meet with affected students at each school.

Schilthroat said the bus driver followed proper procedure throughout the incident, and returned to work immediately instead of asking for a temporary replacement.

"She thought it would be better for the children on her bus if she was there," Schilthroat said, adding she wanted to reassure them that "everything's all right."

Although the driver of the car in this case wasn't seriously injured, other rear-end collisions with school buses have been much more serious.

On Dec. 14, 2011, **two Coopersville students** - Bruce Privacky, 16, and his sister Antonia, 13 - died after their car ran into the back of a stopped school bus.

Ironically, one feature that makes school buses safe for young riders - its greater height off the road - also makes the lights of the bus harder to see, said Schilthroat.

That large gap between the road and the undercarriage also presents a hazard to any vehicle that strikes the bus from behind.

Schilthroat said he supports "the Privacky law," **now being considered by Michigan legislators.**

The law would require new school buses to have enhanced lights to make them more visible from behind, and rear guards to prevent cars from sliding beneath them.

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